

This meeting was very important. There were two presentations, the first by Aaron Christensen, the attorney looking into “issues surrounding Socorro’s management practices, Board governance, etc.” The complete contract with the SEC is attached. Mr. Christensen spent Tuesday in one on one discussions with individual board members and Wednesday morning with Mayor Bhasker and other city officials. He probably also spent time with staff, management, and attorney but I have no direct knowledge of such meetings. Members may communicate with him by way of email and snail mail for the next two months and it is very important that members express their opinions. Contact information attached.

Mr. Christensen’s entire talk and answers to questions from members in attendance at the meeting was taped and it is posted below.

The second presentation was by Kathy Buhl of the Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) (Video below) The CFC has an Integrity Fund which grants money to protect the geographical integrity of rural electric cooperatives from hostile takeovers by other companies. The SEC applied for such a grant and Ms. Buhl announced that the grant was approved which means that they will give the SEC \$263,000 a year with a approximate \$600,000 life time cap to fight the City of Socorro if the city does decide to break off from the SEC. A question from the audience clarified that no SEC member or Mayor Bhasker was spoken to concerning the situation. The CFC deals only with the “corporation” which means management although member/owners do own the cooperative. Ms. Buhl cites the fact that the members elect trustees as their representatives so they do have a voice. The problems with trustees did not factor into the decision to award the grant. This action is reminiscent of 2010 when the trustees sued the members. There were no copies of the report available for distribution but I will write a formal request on behalf of the SEC Reform Group so that members may be able to read the report in its entirety.

The meeting was fairly well attended by members, Mayor Bhasker and other city officials with the result that public comments (also taped and posted) were lively and in some cases very hard hitting.

The SEC Foundation Committee, Trustees Dorrough, Cordova & Wade, met before the Board Meeting to devise new policies in regard to scholarships. Final action will not be voted on until next month’s meeting but one proposed change produced some spirited debate. Seems that no child will be considered for a scholarship if his/her parents are delinquent on their bill. This is a big problem given the trouble with estimate billing which often results in sky high amounts being charged. One member who has been protesting the manner in which scholarships are awarded was told that the reason his son was not considered was because their account was delinquent. The fact that he was questioning a estimated bill of \$3,100 which was found to be wrong did not matter nor did the fact that no policy at that time addressed delinquency. Members should consider if this is fair as they can take corrective action by bylaw amendment. Video below.

An almost hour long executive session followed the open meeting. Of note was the change that Trustee Wagner was allowed to attend. Those of you who remember the police being called to forcibly and illegally remove him from the room will find this very odd. Mr. Christensen was in attendance at the executive session.